

The USAFE 'We the People' Bookshelf program will begin this month and continues throughout the year. Page 2

## First Look

### Celebrity auction

The Company Grade Officer Council is hosting a dinner buffet/auction today at the Top of the Rock Club. Dinner is at 6 p.m., auction is at 7 p.m. Dinner is \$18 for members, \$20 for non-members. Attendees don't have to go to dinner to attend the auction. For more information, call 2nd Lt. Gregory Cooper at 2-6501.

### Artwork auction

The African American Awareness Committee's artwork silent auction starts at 4 p.m. today at the Top of the Rock Club. For more information call Staff Sgt. Shana Stewart at 2-3464.

### PS2 tournament

A PlayStation2 Madden tournament is at 6 p.m. Saturday at the Sun & Sand Hut. Cost is \$5 per player. For more information, call Staff Sgt. Phillip Burns and Staff Sgt. William Diehl 2-5166.

### Valentine sale

The Lajes Officers Spouses Club is having a Valentine's Day create-a-bouquet flower sale Feb. 11-12 and 14 at the Commissary, with a bake sale on Feb. 12. Cost of bouquets vary with choice of flowers.

### Prayer luncheon

The 2005 National Prayer Luncheon is at 11:30 a.m. Feb. 11 at the Top of the Rock Club. The guest speaker is Chaplain, Col., Stephen Frick, USAFE command chaplain. For reservations, call the chapel by Feb. 7 at 2-4211.

### Preflight

- Days since last DUI...16
- DUIs since Jan. 1.....1
- Current AEF..... 3 & 4
- Current FPCON..... Alpha
- Combat Nighthawk: Capt Vernon Bryant, 65th Comptroller Squadron; Master Sgt. Shannon Parker, 65th Mission Squadron



### Lajes Idol

Kori Lance, 729th Air Mobility Squadron, won first place during the idol karaoke night at the Top of the Rock Club Jan. 27. The USAFE Idol talent contest is at 7 p.m., Feb. 19 at the Top of the Rock Club. The contest is open to all active duty Air Force members assigned to USAFE units, DoD and NAF civilians and family member spouses. The contest will be divided into two categories, USAFE units contestants and Team Lajes contestants. The winner of the USAFE units contestants' category will advance to the USAFE level competition at Ramstein Air Base, Germany in April. To sign up, call or e-mail Sheryl Bush at 2-5216 or sheryl.bush@lajes.af.mil or Richard Christie at 2-6210 or richard.christie@lajes.af.mil. Deadline is Saturday. (Photo by Guido Melo)

## Looking back on history, USAFE celebrates 63rd birthday

By Capt. Krista Carlos  
USAFE News Service

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany (USAFENS) — As the oldest active major command in the Air Force, the U.S. Air Forces in Europe celebrated its 63rd birthday Jan. 19.

Throughout the years, USAFE Airmen and assets have played a significant role in securing peace and stability to the region.

"From the days of World War II, to Desert Storm and the Balkan operations to the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, USAFE has played a vital role in providing for a free and stable Europe," said Gen. Robert H. "Doc" Foglesong, USAFE commander. "USAFE has a rich history of contributing to the success of every major military operation in theater since its activation."

During WWII, USAFE forces conducted daylight bombing operations over continental Europe from bases in the United Kingdom, and later incorporated reconnaissance of enemy movements throughout occupied Europe.

In addition to combat and peacekeeping operations, the command has conducted more than 160 humanitarian relief operations, ranging from the Berlin Airlift and relief in the Balkans to responding to natural disasters. At the same time, it served as the cornerstone of the NATO alliance and saved lives throughout Europe and the Middle East. Most recently, USAFE forces stepped up to provide aid to people from as far away as India with the tsunami relief effort.

In 1991, USAFE committed more than 15 percent of its personnel and 33 percent of its aircraft to support Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

In the mid 1990s, USAFE became involved in the Balkans operations. From Operations Deny Flight to Shining Hope, the command helped bring opposing forces to the peace table while providing humanitarian relief to Kosovo Albanians.

While the command has changed over the years, its focus has remained constant.

"USAFE forces have always demonstrated the capability and flexibility to perform a variety of missions," said Dr. John Sullivan, USAFE command historian. "Currently we're facing the new threat, global terrorism. Throughout these 63 years, organizational structures and doctrine may have changed, but the command's mission and courage and resolve of its people have not."

Today, as our military transforms to face a global threat in non-conventional warfare, USAFE has also adapted to face the challenge.

"Sept. 11, 2001 changed the world forever," General Foglesong said. "USAFE has stepped up to the challenge by providing world-class support to the theater of operations. Today, our over 32,000 personnel and assets are the forward projection of American power in the European theater. We will continue to transform to meet mission requirements, and our expeditionary mentality will allow us to be flexible and responsive to the challenges that await us."

"As we celebrate USAFE's 63rd birthday, I would like to thank our dedicated professionals who have served, and continue to serve, in support of the mission," said General Foglesong. "I'm proud of our legacy of success as the most respected and feared air and space force in the world, and I'm looking forward to our future achievements."



## Up to the challenge

*Chief Master Sgt. Gary Coleman, U.S. Air Forces in Europe command chief master sergeant, knocks out some pushups, kicking off the Berlin to Baghdad Push-Up Challenge. The challenge, sponsored by the Chief's Groups across the command, is a competition for individual and three-person teams to see who can "gut" out the most pushups within 10 minutes. Collectively, the HQ USAFE Team, consisting of Gen. Robert H. "Doc" Foglesong, USAFE commander; Lt. Gen. Arthur Lichte, USAFE vice commander; and Chief Coleman, knocked out 339 pushups. All proceeds go to benefit the Air Force Enlisted Heritage Hall. Now it's your turn. For more information about the challenge contact Chief Master Sgt. Trevor Henry, acting 65th Air Base Wing command chief. (Photo by Master Sgt. Mona Ferrell)*

## Project wizard brings "freedom" to readers

HQ USAFE SERVICES - SEMBACH AB GE - "We the People." It's a phrase that begins both the United States Constitution and the National Endowment for the Humanities Bookshelf program.

The NEH program was developed to encourage young people to read classic literature that embodies American ideals.

This year's theme for the "We the People Bookshelf" is "Freedom," and the goal of the selected titles is to bolster the understanding of American history and culture.

Each USAFE base library has a set of the freedom books in four age appropriate categories, along with posters, bookmarks and program incentives.

The libraries will set aside these books for their young readers and some locations will organize special displays or programs highlighting the theme of freedom.

Last year, the We the People bookshelf theme celebrated "Courage" and these books are still available at the base libraries as well.

The freedom books are packed with enriching and exciting tales that have both influenced and been derived from our American culture. In Paul Goble's gentle story,

*The Girl who Loved Wild Horses*, a young Native American girl with a special relationship with horses will enchant very young readers.

The House of Dies Drear involves the main character, Thomas, in a heart pounding mystery that dates from the Civil War. Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, a story about a fireman whose job is to burn books, will peak the interest of Junior High readers. High Schoolers will enjoy the *Miracle at Philadelphia*, which places the Constitutional Convention within the context of the time in which it was created.

The USAFE 'We the People Bookshelf' program will begin this month and continues throughout the year.

To find out more about the program, visit <http://www.usafelibraries.org/5-5.php>, or stop by and visit the base library.



## Storks move from Andrews to Germany

**By Capt. Yvonne Levardi  
Chief, public affairs**

On Tuesday, a policy change at the 65th Medical Group was enacted that will save spouses, military members and the Air Force both time and money.

The 65th MDG's sole storknesting location for those pregnant women who want an epidural for pain management in labor will now be Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany instead of Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

"This is a great change for those women who want to storknest," said Maj. Jill O'Rear, chief of women's health services at Lajes. "This will significantly shorten time away from spouse and family. What used to take as long as four months is now eight weeks at the absolute longest."

Pregnant women will leave for Germany between 35-36 weeks of pregnancy and return between

7-10 days post partum.

By regulation, Air Force medical services must provide pregnant women the option to have an epidural during labor and delivery. Until recently, Lajes' only guaranteed source was at Andrews.

"Angra is still our preferred facility for low-risk deliveries, with the benefits of excellent care and only a few days of hospitalization. So many of our moms have had their babies there – but they cannot offer guaranteed epidural support," Major O'Rear said. "Storknesting at Andrews was both time-consuming and expensive; Spangdahlem is simply a better solution."

Additionally, Andrews will soon demolish the snork nesting facility.

In August, 2004, Incirlik Air Base, Turkey mothers-to-be made the same change while local facilities underwent major

upgrades. More than 22 babies and 80 family members were cared for with the Spangdahlem storknesting program through November 2004. According to the major, although the Lajes change was made for different reasons, the staff in Germany is ready to help out Lajes moms-to-be.

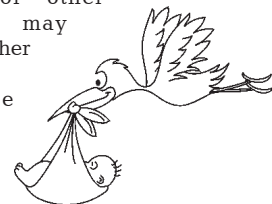
At Spangdahlem, the military personnel flight passport office and photo personnel come to the hospital and expedite passport processing, saving families the drive to Bitburg, and taking only days instead of the weeks it might take in the continental United States.

Spangdahlem also has a sponsorship program for women who storknest there. Family support center staff will meet the mothers the day after arrival to provide one-on-one assistance, groceries and a cell phone to keep in touch with family members. The FSC will also pair up a volunteer sponsor with

the pregnant woman who will help with transportation, shopping or other needs she may have during her stay.

While there, the women stay in the temporary lodging facility which is about a five-minute walk from major base facilities – hospital, base exchange, Commissary and food court. And, staying at the TLF provides more privacy than was offered at Andrews, because the women don't have to share space with others.

"All in all, this is a positive change," she said. "We'll have more visibility on our storknesting moms-to-be, they will be closer to home and time away will be shorter."



## Fuel prices decrease

MAINZ-KASTEL – The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is providing advance notice of fuel price changes effective Tuesday as a service to its customers assigned in Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Turkey and the Azores. The new overseas fuel prices will be effective until Feb. 28.

For the 5 weeks ending Jan. 24, the Department of Energy's average price for all grades of gasoline, including diesel, decreased. As a result, the February sell prices reflect the following average changes, per gallon, by grade:

Regular - \$.073, Mid-grade - \$.076, Premium - \$.074, Diesel - \$.084

According to the DoE, the average price for regular unleaded fuel in the U.S. is \$.2310 cents a gallon higher than it was at the same time last year.

In the Azores the AAFES price for super plus unleaded was \$2.182 per gallon and will decrease to \$2.119 per gallon.

In Germany, the AAFES price for normal unleaded fuel will drop from \$2.046 to \$1.974 per gallon. The price for super-unleaded fuel changes from \$2.151 down to \$2.075 per gallon, super plus, \$2.248 down to \$2.175 and the price for diesel fuel from \$2.208 lowered to \$2.125 per gallon.

In the Netherlands, new fuel sell prices for all grades including diesel were set at the "floor" selling price, per AAFES Board of Directors policy. "Floor" prices occur

when the cost of fuel plus dispensing costs are greater than the DoE average plus dispensing costs. Customers in the Netherlands will see an increase for super-unleaded fuel from \$2.151 to \$2.259 per gallon, the price for super-plus unleaded will go from \$2.349 to \$2.517 per gallon, and the price for diesel fuel will go down from \$2.482 to \$2.316 per gallon.

AAFES' customers in the United Kingdom will see a decrease from \$2.085 down to \$2.009 a gallon for super-unleaded fuel.

Diesel fuel for customers is down from \$2.142 to \$2.059 per gallon.

For customers in Turkey the new AAFES price for Super plus unleaded will be lowered from \$2.196 to \$2.127 per gallon.

The price for super-unleaded fuel coupons will remain at \$2.340 and the price for diesel fuel will remain at \$2.280.

AAFES continues to remind customers that the Germany/Netherlands Series 5 gas coupons with an expiration date of Sept. 30 will be extended for acceptance at AAFES Gas Stations through April 30.

However, gas stations on the economy will only accept the Series 6 gas coupons currently for sale at AAFES facilities with an expiration date of Sept. 30.

Customers can request refunds for unused gas coupons, as long as they are still attached to the original booklet, at any AAFES facility, until Sept. 30.

## At Their Best

The following people will be or have been promoted in the month of February:

To 1st Lt.: **Randall Pletzer**, 65th Communications Squadron  
To Master Sgt.: **Felicia Lewis**, 65th Logistics Readiness Squadron

To Tech. Sgt.: **Jose Chi**, 65th Mission Support Squadron;  
**Juan Pena**, 729th Air Mobility Squadron

To Staff Sgt.: **Ryan Balliet**, 65th LRS; **Joshua Carpenter**, 65th Civil Engineer Squadron; **Michael Mayfield**, 65th Operations Support Squadron; **Chadrick Minnifield**, 65th Comptroller Squadron; **Edward Mueller**, 65th LRS; **Joyce Pascu**, 65th CS; **Ebony Wilson**, 729th AMS

To Senior Airman: **Eugene Floyd**, 729th AMS; **Scott Fiebig**, 65th Security Forces Squadron; **Jesse Martin**, 729th AMS; **Delora Oliver**, 65th CS

To Airman 1st Class: **Julie Audell**, 65th CS



# Time for taxes

## Appointments available

By Staff Sgt.  
Olenda Kleffner  
Crossroads editor

People who need to get their taxes done can schedule an appointment at the Lajes Tax Center in Building T-426, rooms 101-104, by calling 2-1040.

The center is providing tax preparation for military and DoD members along with free electronic filing of federal returns.

Instead of mailing tax returns and waiting for refunds in the mail, people can file with the Federal e-file system. With e-file system, refunds can be deposited within a few weeks. The tax center can also help with state income taxes.

Only Airmen, E-1 – E-4, can get their taxes done between now and Feb. 11. Beginning Feb. 14, everyone else can make an appointment to have their taxes done.

Here are some general guidelines to help people determine which tax form to use:

### 1040EZ

- \*Taxable income below \$100,000
- \*Single or Married filing jointly
- \*Under age 65
- \*No dependents (spouses are not considered dependents for tax filing purposes, they are an exemption)
- \*Interest income of \$1,500 or less

### 1040A

- \*Taxable income below \$100,000
- \*Capital gain distributions,

but no other capital gains or losses

\*Only tax credits for child, education, earned income, child and dependent care expenses, adoption, elderly and retirement savings contributions

\*Only deductions for IRA contributions, student loan interest, educator expenses or higher education tuition and fees

\*No itemized deductions

### 1040

\*Taxable income of \$100,000 or more

- \*Itemized deductions
- \*Self-employment income
- \*Income from sale of property

"If you cannot use either a 1040EZ or 1040A, you probably need a regular 1040," said Tech. Sgt. Erica Bairos, 65th Air Base Wing. "You can use the 1040 to report all types of income, deductions and credits. You may have been mailed a 1040A or 1040EZ tax package this year based on the return you filed last year. If your situation has changed this year, it may be to your advantage to file a 1040 instead. For example, you may pay less tax by filing a 1040 because you have enough deductions to itemize this year."

Sergeant Bairos said if people have them, they should also bring in last year's tax returns to their appointment.

The tax center is open 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday–Friday, by appointment only. People may come in at anytime to pick up forms and publications.

For more information, call the tax center at 2-1040.



## Everyday Hero

**Tech. Sgt. Andrew Mix**  
**65th Services Squadron**

**Duty title:** NCOIC, Dining Facility

**Job description:** Provides direct oversight and supervision to 27 local national and 7 military personnel charged with the daily production of 750 meals. Ensures completion of all applicable meal processing data to include Corporate Food Service and Aloha cash register systems. Manages issued subsistence, verifying accuracy of rations support and item preparation. Prepares meal entrees, soups, starches, vegetables and basic desserts in accordance with Air Force guidance. Ensures weekly completion of AF Form 977, Facility Evaluation, monitoring compliance with the USDA Food Code. Monitors specialty meal program to include ordering required decorations. Provides information to management regarding all ancillary food functions. Maintains inventory tracking system for all custodial and expendable food supplies. Maintains facility security during assigned duty hours.

**Time in the Air Force:** 18 years

**Time at Lajes:** five months

**Family members:** wife, Mary; mother and father, Jack and Sandy; daughter, Amanda and son, Michael.

**What's the best aspect of your job:** Meeting and working with outstanding people.

**What are your career goals:** Would like to get a follow-on in Europe and retire after that.

**Best Air Force experience:** Traveling the world

**Life goal:** After retirement enjoy life, maybe get another job to stay busy.

**Hometown:** Burlington, Iowa

**One word to describe you:** Dedicated

CROSSROADS

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## Renew Focus to Reduce Preventable Accidents

The Defense Department wants servicemembers and civilians to concentrate on safety whether they're on or off duty, DoD's top personnel official said Jan. 24.

Each year scores of sailors, soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Coast Guard members, as well as DoD civilians, are killed or injured by preventable accidents, David S.C. Chu, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, told attendees here at the annual Tricare conference.

For example, "we lose several hundred military persons a year in motor vehicle accidents," Mr. Chu pointed out, noting, "that tragic record continues" during military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

DoD has been evaluating its safety policies and programs as part of its transformation efforts, Mr. Chu noted. In a May 2003 memorandum Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld stated that top organizations like DoD "do not tolerate preventable accidents."

The secretary directed Mr. Chu to lead the effort to reduce the number of mishaps and accident rates within DoD by 50 percent over the next two years.

"These goals are achievable, and will directly increase our operational readiness," Mr. Rumsfeld said in the memo, adding, "We owe no less to the men and women who defend our nation."

Meeting the secretary's short-term safety goal requires "real process change" across the department, Mr. Chu pointed out. To facilitate that change, the Defense Safety Oversight Council was established, he noted, comprised of the undersecretaries of defense, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the undersecretaries of the military departments.

That group meets every other month, Mr. Chu observed, to provide guidance "and to monitor the accident-reduction efforts the department is undertaking."

DoD's long-term safety goal, Mr. Chu explained, "is zero preventable mishaps." The council's existence, he noted, demonstrates DoD's senior leadership "is involved in pursuing this goal."

Also, Mr. Chu said, a series of task forces have been set up to address safety concerns in military aviation, training, deployment operations, installation/industrial operations, privately operated motor vehicle safety, and workmen's compensation.

Mr. Chu said another task force examines acquisition/technology safety issues, while yet another looks at establishing a DoD-wide safety monitoring system. A general officer or a Senior Executive Service civilian heads each task force, he noted, which all utilize input from safety experts from across DoD and private industry.

The acquisition/technology task force, Mr. Chu explained, studies lessons learned to improve safety standards for present and future military systems. For example, he said, the task force examined the issue of missing or outdated safety features on tactical military vehicles.

As a result, he pointed out, the Army is now retrofitting its heavy-truck fleet - including trucks used in combat theaters - with quick-release, multi-point seat belts and anti-lock brakes.



## Just visiting

*Senior Airman Mike Sholes, Major Rich Fillman, Staff Sgt. Larenza Smartt and Staff Sgt. Fred Cowell are all part of the 65th Logistics Readiness Squadron here deployed to the 455th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron at Bagram Air Field. (Courtesy photo)*

"Vehicle crashes are the largest accidental killer of U.S. military personnel," Mr. Chu asserted, noting that in Iraq Humvees and tactical cargo trucks "comprise the largest segment of accidental vehicle deaths." Department safety experts believe that ensuring seat belt usage by servicemembers, controlling speed, and managing driver fatigue "can reduce these accidents," he said.

And the leading noncombat-associated killer of service members, Mr. Chu said, is privately operated vehicle accidents - including motorcycles.

The highest risk group in this category, Mr. Chu noted, includes servicemembers 18- 24 years of age. Military commanders, he said, will continue to issue safety messages to troops "to re-emphasis the need to exercise good judgment."

Mr. Chu told care providers at the Tricare conference that medical surveillance is a "key element" of DoD's injury-reduction program.

"We need to know where, when and why an injury occurs," he explained, noting it's important to know not only the types of servicemember injuries, "but also the causes."

"Important progress" has been made on the safety front, Mr. Chu maintained, but he noted, "We've got a long way to go to meet the secretary's goals."

## Staying in the Reserve after separation can pay off

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. (AFPN) — Should I stay or should I go? For those in uniform, it is a question they face each time they come to the end of their enlistment. To many, deciding to stay on active duty or switch to the civilian sector seems to be their only options.

Air Force Reserve officials beg to differ.

Tech. Sgt. Michael Nienhaus, an in-service recruiter here, offers people another choice: keep their military benefits and serve their country while holding down a civilian job.

"There are many programs and benefits the Reserve (has to offer)," Sergeant Nienhaus said. "There's 100 percent educational assistance as well as accessibility to [college credits tests] and the commissary and base exchange privileges. Also, there are family dental and medical benefits for the (Airman) while (he or she is) in uniform."

In the Reserve, people can take advantage of programs like individual mobilization augmentee to balance their duty commitments with their civilian occupations.

"IMA is a great program for a stable full-time

student and is very flexible by not taking up weekends," Sergeant Nienhaus said. "Under this program, reservists are required to work 26 days a year, which includes two weeks of duty."

Those wanting to serve on a weekly basis can apply for the full-time Air Reserve Technician program. People in these civil service jobs must be fully qualified and have their five skill level completed to apply for a job in their specialty. Airmen receive the same benefits as those on active duty. To qualify, the Reserve unit must have an opening in the Airman's career field and skill level, he said.

Meanwhile, enlisted Airmen can turn in their stripes for bars through the Deserving Airmen Program commissioning source.

"About 70 percent of Reserve officers are hired (from) within the Reserve enlisted ranks," Sergeant Nienhaus said.

All Airmen thinking of getting out should see an in-service recruiter during their outprocessing, Sergeant Nienhaus said. He suggests these people reply early, show up with an open mind, listen to what the recruiter has to offer and have a game plan ready. He suggests married Airmen talk with their spouse about their options and have questions ready to ask.

About 20 percent of active-duty Airmen choose to cross over to the Reserve, he said.

"A few requirements must be met, including passing the fitness test and having a good (preventative)-health assessment," Sergeant Nienhaus said. "Those with medical reasons resulting in poor health or [those with] disciplinary problems such as suspended punishment or [those] on a control roster are ineligible for the Reserve."

To maintain education benefits from the Montgomery G.I. Bill, Airmen must be on active duty for two years before crossing over to the Reserve, where they must serve for four more years. Servicemembers going into the Reserve with no outstanding service obligations can enter a one-year contract.

Reservists qualify for retirement and full medical benefits after serving 20 years and once they reach the age of 60.



## *Prayer: an American freedom*

**By Chaplain (Lt. Col.)  
Michael Coggins  
65th Air Base Wing chaplain**

From its very inception, the U.S. was built upon the timeless principle of freedom. The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States highlights one of our freedoms when it declares: "Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof ..." The Constitution guarantees our right to freely worship God, and to pray to God according to the beliefs and dictates of our own conscience. That is a precious freedom indeed—one that is conspicuously absent in other parts of our world.

I have enjoyed the freedom and

privilege of prayer my entire life. It has always been an integral part of my personal and family life, church and community involvement.

I remember some years ago my sister gave me a plaque that stated, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." I sincerely believe that to be true.

Through prayer we acknowledge our dependence on God, and seek His aid and involvement in specific areas of our lives and our world. There are countless concerns we share in common that are best handled with prayer—personal and family issues, neighborhood and community needs, national and global problems.

I have witnessed God's intervention in all these areas, and believe that in response

to our prayers, God can do more than we could ever dream possible.

The National Prayer Breakfast is an annual event observed by the President, members of Congress, and other military and civic leaders as an important reminder of the religious heritage of America. Next week on Feb. 11, the Lajes community will be observing this event with a National Prayer Luncheon beginning at 11:30 a.m. at the Top of the Rock Club. Cost of the luncheon is \$6, and you can sign up by contacting your unit representatives or stopping by the chapel. The guest speaker will be Chaplain (Col.) Steve Frick, the USAFE Command Chaplain. Come join us for this special and important event as we focus on prayer for our nation, its leaders, and the world.

## **Give the power to the people**

**By Col. Barbara Jacobi  
65th Air Base Wing  
commander**

Part of military service is improving how we do things today. Anytime you show up to a new assignment, take on a new task or set goals for your unit, you should be asking yourself "What can I do to make this part of the Air Force better?"

Each one of us has unique talents and abilities, various backgrounds and experiences, and different knowledge and ideas that we bring with us. The diversity of the Air Force's people is one of its major strengths. But leaders must be able to tap into that resource by giving power to their people to change things for the better.

I just graduated from Lajes Customer College Master's course, and was pleased to see all the first sergeants there too. The one-day class focused on helping Lajes' leaders to allow their people to implement new ideas that might improve the customer service processes in their workplaces. I wish the master's course would have preceded the customer college course, it's an excellent class for commanders, supervisors and leaders and I'd recommend it to anyone in a supervisory role.

As a prior services commander, I can tell you that customer service can really make

the difference in someone's day. No matter what job you do, you have a customer who requires your service. No matter how well you do your job, there's usually something that you can improve. And no matter how bad a day you're having, your customer should always feel appreciated. Each of us has the power within us to serve our customers like true professionals.

Most of our jobs at Lajes involve serving each other: Lajes serving Lajes. But whether we're serving one another or persons in transit, our mission is to provide world-class service to world-class people – the service men and women of the United States and its allies.

We do our mission very well at Lajes, from one end of the flight line to the other, from the flight kitchen to the Commissary and from AFN to the OSI detachment. But we should always encourage new ideas to improve how we do things today.

The Coronet Liaison burger burns, our emergency response to incidents like a bird strike, or the Nascar like pit-stop service we provide every day on the tarmac, are examples of how good ideas and processes help Team Lajes contribute to the Air Force mission to defend the United States and protect its interests.

I know there are great ideas

out there to further improve how we serve our customers.

Graduates from Lajes' customer college come away refocused on the customer with new ideas on how to improve the way we do business. Leaders should be approachable and supportive of the enthusiasm and ingenuity that their people want to express.

Quality customer service begins with following proper customs and courtesies and treating all people with dignity and respect. Commanders, supervisors and NCOICs should set the tone in their organizations by serving their people the way they themselves would like to be served and then asking their people to serve their customers the same way. Outstanding customer service truly starts by putting yourself in the customers' shoes.

While world-class service should exist throughout the entire organization it is most essential at the wing's interfaces with our customers. USAFE's Welcome Mat program is an example of focusing on high-traffic customer service locations like the passenger terminal, billeting, military personnel center and finance that form newcomers' and visitors' first impression of the wing. They also leave the last impression when our visitors or teammates leave. These locations are crucial

in helping Team Lajes put our best foot forward.

As Lajes extends that foot forward into deployed locations, it is imperative to take that top-notch customer service with us. That's where it really counts. USAFE University programs like the Combat Support Center of Excellence, where we send Airmen to learn and hone their war-time and combat customer support core tasks and skills, help us learn how to support our war-time fighters with excellence.

I am proud to be a part of USAFE and I'm glad the command focuses on superior customer service in peace and in war. Lajes is a shining example of world-class people providing world-class service to those who've invested in the fight for freedom.

I hope commanders and supervisors are granting their people the freedom to try new things. I encourage Customer College graduates to come back with ideas to change things for the better. And I challenge all Lajes commanders, supervisors, and NCOICs to tap into your peoples' unique qualities by opening up a forum to find and discuss new ideas, and then implement them. Let me start by inviting anyone that has an idea to improve the wing to call the Commander's Line at 295-57-4240 or email [ccline@lajes.af.mil](mailto:ccline@lajes.af.mil).



## Mardi Gras Portuguese style

The Portuguese will celebrate "Carnaval," or Mardi Gras as its known to the Americans, tonight through Tuesday night.

The origin of Carnaval is vague and seems to be related to pre-Christian customs. This ancient cultural event is celebrated throughout mainland Portugal, Madeira and the Azores as well as in many European and South American countries.

In the Azores, and on Terceira Island in particular, Carnaval is mostly celebrated in the form of dancing groups who travel from town to town starting tonight and ending Tuesday night, almost without any interruption. These dance groups are usually comprised of 12 to 24 dancers dressed with colorful costumes and carrying musical instruments.

The groups' performance, which is basically a play, usually includes three distinct parts: the "greeting" in which the dancers greet the public; the "topic" in which the dancers develop the plot; and the "farewell" part, in which the performers thank the audience for their attendance and wish them the best. The performances usually take place in the towns' community centers, theaters or other public areas.

These dancing groups usually take advantage of Carnaval to criticize the government's actions or to make fun of situations or events that happened throughout the past year, since almost any criticism is accepted during this period. Other groups choose, however, to deal with more serious themes such as the lives of kings, saints or even real life dramas that happened in the past.

Every year, Angra High School students organize a Carnaval parade in Angra's main streets followed by a comic bullfight in the Angra bullring. This year's parade will take place Sunday at 1:30 p.m. followed by the bullfight at 3 p.m. Tickets for the bullfight can be purchased at the door.

Island community centers, pubs and night clubs will also organize masquerade balls tomorrow and Monday night.

There are no real safety concerns, but people should be aware of some local customs. It's traditional for people to disguise themselves in funny costumes and wear masks intended to scare people or just imitate popular figures. Another tradition is to toss eggs, flour, water balloons or use squirt guns to hit passersby. So, make sure your car windows are rolled

up and try to avoid those pranksters when driving or walking if you don't want to get wet.

People driving around the island during the Carnaval days will probably find traffic heavier than usual and should drive cautiously and with patience.

Although the language barrier may pose an obstacle for Americans, I encourage everybody to go off-base and experience the local culture and have fun.



(Above) Carnaval is mostly celebrated in the form of dancing groups who travel from town to town starting tonight and ending Tuesday night, almost without any interruption. These dance groups are usually comprised of 12 to 24 dancers dressed with colorful costumes and carrying musical instruments.

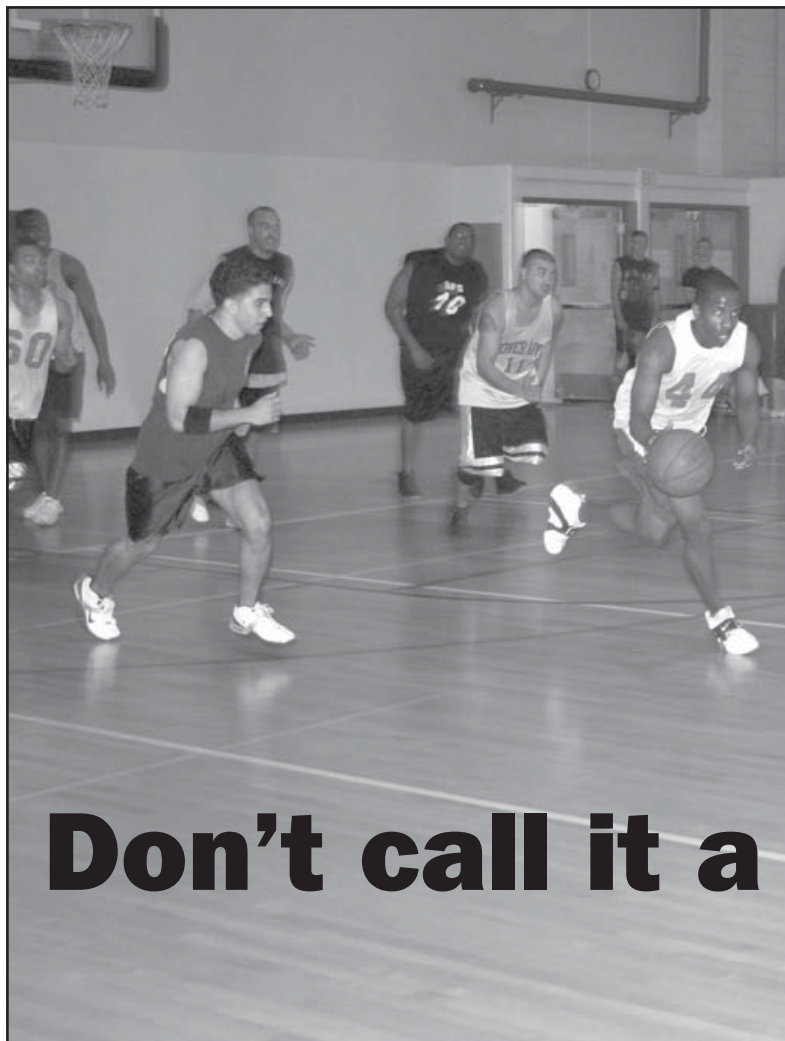
(Left) The groups' performance, which is basically a play, usually includes three distinct parts: the "greeting" in which the dancers greet the public; the "topic" in which the dancers develop the plot; and the "farewell" part, in which the performers thank the audience for their attendance and wish them the best. The performances usually take place in the towns' community centers, theaters or other public areas. (Courtesy of Foto Melo)



*(Above) Jason Swartz, 65th CS, is too late to stop Kenneth McLaurin, 65th CES, from draining the game-winning three-pointer with 2 seconds left on the clock to avoid going into overtime Jan. 20. The win sent CS home and CES to the finals for a rematch against the 65th SFS. (Photo by 1st Lt. Aaron Wiley)*

*(Right) George Jusino gives chase as Edward Lucas, 65th CES, pushes the ball up-court in the first finals game Jan. 27. CES won the game 42-36, forcing a second game. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Olenda Kleffner)*

*(Below) The crowd waits for the bucket as Edward Lucas and George Jusino do battle in the first finals game. Senhor Sequeira doesn't have to blow the whistle this time, but waits for the score. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Olenda Kleffner)*



# Don't call it a



**By 1st Lt. Aaron Wiley  
Deputy Chief, public affairs**

A comeback and the 65th Civil Engineer Squadron intramural basketball team's 7-0 season seemed like two incompatible ideas, until the fourth-place 65th Security Forces Squadron escorted them to the loser's bracket on a 43-41 upset victory Jan. 20, here.

The cops handed the defending champs their first loss of the season in CES's first playoff game in the fight for wing bragging rights.

After sending both the 65th Medical Group and the CES teams packing, the cops slipped past the 65th Communications Squadron 40-34, Jan. 25 for a trip to the finals where they sat on a 3-0 playoff performance and waited for their next contender.

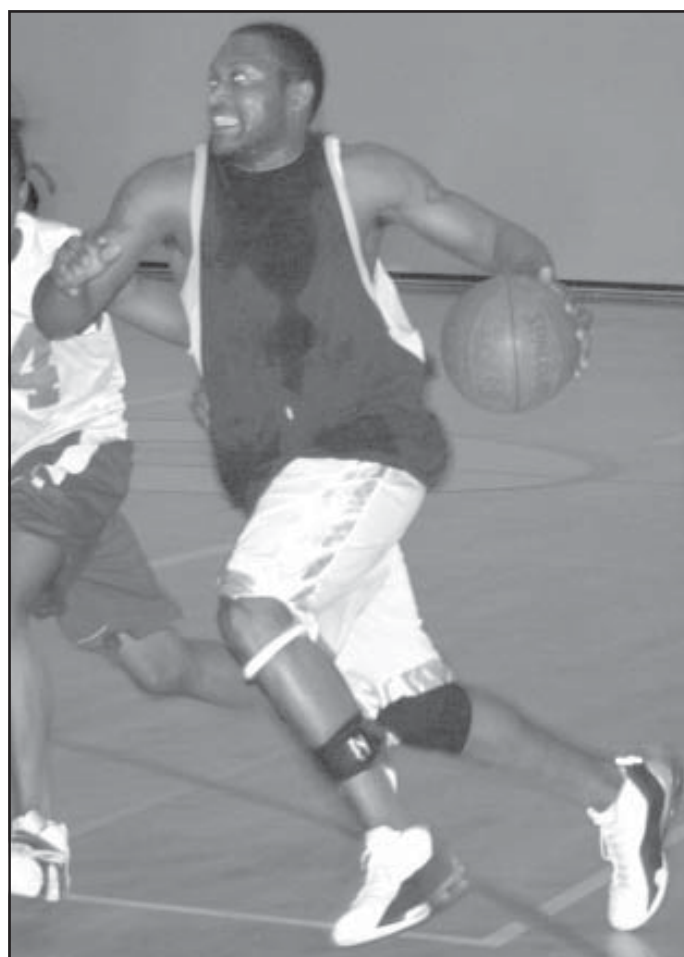
In the loser's bracket, CES had to win the rest of their games to safeguard the intramural basketball trophy for the second year in a row. They picked up momentum after winning on a forfeit and then eliminating the 729th Air Mobility Squadron 53-43, Jan. 25. The second-place CS, however, wasn't going anywhere easy.

In a game that led to the finals, CES and the Commies traded leads many times until CS began to pull away at the end. But with about a minute left, during a timeout, Christopher Rodriguez, CES's coach, gave his teammates some last words of encouragement.





# comeback ...



*Bobby Drayton, 65th Services Squadron, runs the floor for the 65th SFS in the first finals game. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Olenda Kleffner)*

"At the last minute I told my team we didn't come this far to lose, so man up," Rodriguez said.

CES did, and came back. With the score tied at 53 and 2 seconds left on the clock, the game was headed for overtime, until Kenneth McLaurin, CES, drained the game-winning three-pointer just before the buzzer. CES was on their way to the finals, but would have to beat the cops twice to win it all.

SFS, the 2003 wing intramural basketball champions, were waiting with their guns locked and loaded, ready to reclaim the title that CES stole from them in 2004. All the cops needed was one more win, but CES came into the finals electrified by three straight wins.

It looked as if CES would make a comeback when they shocked the cops in the first finals game with a 42-36 victory, after Phillip Burns, CES, carried his team to within one game of the championship title on a 16 point performance.

But in the end, justice prevailed over what was once an unbeatable team turned Comeback Kid and the cops took back what was now their rightful claim.

In the second finals game showdown, Terrance Williams, SFS, caught fire for 25 points and the security forces turned up the defense to flip-the-switch on CES and beat them in a 43-38 role reversal, despite a strong 18 point contribution from Edward Lucas, CES.



*Eric Rollman, 65th CES, swats Terrance Williams, 65th SFS, in the first game of the finals Jan. 27. CES won 42-36 forcing a second game. The SFS won the second game 43-38 and the 2005 wing intramural basketball championship title. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Olenda Kleffner)*

## Focus

Ray Harriss, coach for the Bantam 1 youth basketball team, teaches Nicholas Denny, son of Jennifer and 1st Lt. Scott Denny, how to dribble while looking up at his opponent at the same time during practice July 27. The Pee Wee league plays at 9:30 a.m. at the youth center, the Bantams play at 10:30 a.m. at the youth center and the juniors play at 11 a.m. at the Lajes High School gymnasium every Saturday. (Photo by Victoria Kleffner)



## Got it!

(Above) Tabitha Silver and Celina Fillmore watch as Logan Silver catches a ball during a dodgeball tournament at the high school Jan. 27. The Lajes Parent Teacher Organization put on the event. The next PTO event is a spelling bee. About 100 students participated in the dodgeball tournaments. (Right) T.J. Daly, fifth-grader, dives for a ball during a dodgeball tournament at the elementary school Jan. 27. Since T.J. caught the "fly ball," the thrower was out, and a player on his team, who had been eliminated earlier, was allowed to play again. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Olenda Kleffner)



